

THE QUIVER

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"It is very unkind of you not to tell me the name of that man"—p. 850.

TWO STORIES IN ONE.

BY WILLIAM GILBERT, AUTHOR OF "DE PROFUNDIS," "SHIRLEY HALL ASYLUM," ETC.

CHAPTER LVI.—BRIGHTER PROSPECTS.

I WAS so completely bewildered at what I had heard, and the discovery that the signature on the back of the cheque was a forgery, that I was unable to continue the conversation.

Mr. Jordan considerably allowed me time to compose myself, and then said, "There is no doubt, Lady Morpeth, that we have had a narrow escape from becoming victims to two impudent impostors.

It is fortunate their trick has been discovered in time."

"And now," I said, "what steps do you propose taking with respect to my brother?"

"To insert another advertisement will, I suppose, be the better plan," replied Mr. Jordan; "but even on that subject I can advise nothing definite till I have seen my clerk, and heard from him the result of his conversation with the sailor. If he has discovered anything of importance, I will send him to you; but if not, I will call myself to-morrow morning and inform you of what has taken place, and we can then decide on our movements for the future. Perhaps it would be as well," he continued after a moment's reflection, "that you should call at my office, as you would be able to question my clerk yourself on any part of his narrative which might appear obscure. I am sorry to give you so much trouble, but it would also obviate any feeling of curiosity on the part of your servants as to the objects of my visits here."

"I hardly see how," I remarked.

"In case we should succeed in finding your brother, they might connect his appearance with my visits here, and form conclusions on the subject which may be erroneous—at any rate it had better be avoided."

I agreed to these remarks, and Mr. Jordan then left the house.

When I found myself alone I had time to reflect coolly on my interview with the solicitor, and I must say I felt greatly disappointed that all my hopes had been so completely destroyed. There were several points also that had not been satisfactorily cleared up before he left me. That the person calling himself my brother was an impostor, there could be no doubt, but how had he obtained so perfect a knowledge of our family affairs? It was very many years since we had quitted Spital Square, and all trace of us must have been lost, and it was therefore far from probable he could have obtained any information on the subject in the neighbourhood. How could he have become aware of Edmond's dishonesty? As I stated before, we had kept it a profound secret, never speaking of it even among ourselves, as if trying to drown the wickedness of the crime in apparent oblivion, although I felt certain it was as indelibly stamped on the memories of my father and mother as on my own.

I remained at home that evening, and as no news arrived from Mr. Jordan, I assumed he had nothing to communicate, so I resolved to call on him the next day. On being ushered into his private room I began to hope that he had something of importance to communicate to me; nor was I disappointed.

"Although you have not heard from me, Lady Morpeth," he said, "my silence has not been caused from having nothing to tell you. On the contrary, things have taken a most singular turn since I saw

you yesterday. That I may make no mistake in my communication I think it would be the better plan for me to call in my clerk, and let him narrate all that has taken place in his interview with the sailor, whose appearance had such a singular effect on your soi-disant brother."

I agreed to this proposition, and a few moments afterwards the clerk entered the room, and made the following statement:—

"When I left the office yesterday I found the sailor waiting for me in the street. I at first took no notice of him, and was in the act of passing him, when he said, 'It is very unkind of you not to tell me where I can find that man who was with you before we entered the house.'

"What do you want him for?' I asked.

"Well, I hardly know," replied the sailor, "except it be to have a little conversation with him about an infamous trick he played on me some years ago when I returned from India. Do tell me if he is the same man and where I can find him."

"I should hardly think he can be the same man," I replied, "for he is a gentleman, and member of a very respectable family, who are clients of ours."

"That cannot be," said the sailor. "Will you tell me what his name is? for if he is not the man I mean it must be his ghost."

"His name is Mr. Edmond Levesque, and his father was a silk manufacturer in Spitalfields."

"You don't mean to say that fellow—why, you must be dreaming—that fellow has the impudence to call himself by my name!"

"You mean to say, then, that your name is Levesque," I replied.

"I mean to say that it is," said the sailor.

"And what may the name of this man be whose address you want, and who was with me this morning?"

"His name is John Derigny, and his father was porter in my father's warehouse."

"I could now easily understand," continued the clerk, addressing me, "how the man Jackson had produced, was able to give so minute an account of your family. At the same time, determined on this occasion, if possible, not to be imposed upon, and yet not wishing to have the appearance of drawing the man out, I volunteered to take the sailor to Jackson's lodgings, and to find out by the way what more he knew of Mr. Levesque's family. We started off together, and my first question to him was whether he had a sister, and if so why he had not called on her. He told me he had only been in England a few weeks, that he had searched all about Spitalfields for some trace of her, but as no one could give him any information on the subject, he feared all his family were dead.

"But," said he, turning sharply round on me, 'if you are their solicitor, you must know all about them.'

"'I admit that I do,' I replied, 'but at the same time as the firm are solicitors for the family it is their duty not to allow them to be imposed upon, and you must admit, from your appearance, it is not likely they would believe you to be the person you state yourself to be, without good and valid proof.'

"'What good and valid proof can I give?' said the sailor? 'why not bring me before some of the family, and find whether they would not identify me?'

"'Certainly that is fair enough,' I said; 'but I can do nothing till I have informed Mr. Jordan of our interview. Do you still wish to see the man you call Derigny?'

"'Certainly.'

"We now went to the house where I had found Jackson and his friend in the morning. They were not there, and the landlord could give us no particulars concerning them. They had only arrived the night before, and he knew nothing of them whatever. I then asked the sailor for his address, that I might let him know the result of my communication with Mr. Jordan.

"'My address,' he said bitterly, 'my address indeed! Anywhere you like—say Lincoln's Inn Fields, and on the doorstep where you found me this morning; for I have not a shilling in the world to obtain a night's lodging.'

"I reflected for a moment what I had better do, and as he appeared miserably poor, I thought it would be as well to secure a room for him in the lodging-house Jackson and his friend had been at the previous day. I found the landlord had one unoccupied, and having paid for it in advance, I gave the sailor a trifle to provide himself with some food, and then returned here. This morning I have seen him again, and conversed with him on several subjects connected with his family affairs. He told me of his sister's first marriage, of the establishment in Spital Square, of some absurd behaviour of the man Derigny at a ball given at the French Embassy, of an old servant of the name of Alice Morgan, and many other things which left no doubt in my mind that he must be the person he professes himself to be."

When the clerk had concluded his narrative I requested Mr. Jordan to have an interview with the sailor claiming to be my brother, and to ask him to mention what present he had made me shortly before he left his family, and the present I had made to Alice Morgan on her wedding-day. Should he answer these two questions correctly, in the former case a silver watch, and in the latter a French Bible, I authorised Mr. Jordan to supply him with sufficient money to purchase clothes, and to tell him to call on me that evening. Mr. Jordan promised he would do so, and I then left the office in full hopes of speedily meeting my brother, and being able to introduce him to my mother.

CHAPTER LVII.

THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON.

ON arriving at home I wrote to my mother's physician, telling him that it was my intention, unless I sent a telegraphic despatch to the contrary, to return to Brighton the next afternoon; and I then waited with as much patience as I could summon up, the arrival of my brother, or some intelligence from Mr. Jordan's office. I may as well acknowledge that I had no misgiving on the subject, but felt a settled conviction that Edmond would come, and any endeavour to summon up a doubt ended in a signal failure.

Evening at last came, and just before dusk a knock was heard at the door, and I rushed to the head of the staircase to see, if possible, who the visitor might be. Before I could see him, I had recognised my brother's voice inquiring whether I were at home. I was upon the point of going down-stairs to meet him, and had already commenced doing so, when my heart beat so violently that I returned to the drawing-room and advanced towards the window—why I know not. Scarcely a minute afterwards the door opened, and the footman announced Mr. Levesque. Hardly had the door closed again, when I had the happiness of clasping my dear brother in my arms.

It was some minutes before I had sufficiently recovered my self-possession to notice Edmond's appearance. He had changed greatly, though in most respects not for the worse. He certainly appeared much older, far more so than his real age warranted, but on looking more carefully at him, this seemed rather to have been caused by privation and sickness than years. He was dressed and looked like a gentleman, although perhaps to a critical eye his clothes scarcely fitted him in a satisfactory manner, as they had been purchased at some ready-made shop since he had seen Mr. Jordan in the morning. Altogether, however, his personal appearance was such that little trace of the hard life he had led was visible on him, with the exception of his hands, which bore evident signs of having been accustomed to excessive labour.

After the first excitement of our happy meeting had somewhat subsided, we conversed together for some time. To Edmond's inquiries about my mother, I told him the infirm state of her health, of the letter I had received that morning from the physician, and of my intention to return to Brighton the next day. I then repeated to him the principal events which had taken place in our family during his long absence, my second marriage and the death of my husband, Adeline's marriage, and her expected return from India. Edmond then informed me of what had taken place at his interview with Mr. Jordan, and the questions the latter had put to him. Tea was then brought in, and when our meal was over, to my great satisfaction, he proposed giving

me a sketch of his adventures since he had last seen me.

"I dare say," he commenced, "you must have considered me very ungrateful, and that I had acted in a very mysterious manner when I quitted the house as abruptly as I did; but it was not so much my own fault. To make you understand the subject better, I should mention to you that among the passengers on board the ship in which I worked my passage home from India was an invalided soldier of the name of L'Estrange. This man and I soon struck up an acquaintance, which ripened almost into friendship. How it began I hardly know; I think it occurred one calm night, when after talking for some time he said to me, 'I suppose you think it strange, MacIntyre' (for that was the name by which I was known), 'to find an English soldier with as thorough a French name as mine.'

"Not at all," I replied; 'there are many other as thorough Englishmen as you are, with names as completely French, that I have been acquainted with in my time.'

"Oh, that I dare say," he said, 'and especially if you've lived in the neighbourhood of Spitalfields as I did when a boy; there are plenty of them there.'

"My curiosity being stimulated, I inquired what names he remembered, and he mentioned several, among them that of Derigny.

"What Derigny is that?" I asked.

"Well, the one I mean is a cousin of mine. His father was formerly waiter at a tavern, and afterwards took the situation of porter in a silk manufacturer's warehouse in Spital Square. I did not know much of the father, but my cousin and I were very great friends.'

"What sort of a man was he?" I asked.

"Well, between ourselves," he replied, 'he was somewhat of a go-ahead fellow, and had once been in trouble about some money he had been accused of making free with. However, he was acquitted, so nothing can be said against him.'

"He then asked me if I knew much of Spitalfields, and I told him I did. We conversed about different spots in the locality and similar subjects, and when I was more intimate with him I was foolish enough to tell him my real name. He had also heard of the adventure with my commanding officer, and of my having deserted, as I afterwards discovered to my cost.

"When the ship arrived in England we quitted it together and came up to town, where we parted, he to find his cousin, and I to see you, Clara. Well, you remember giving me some money to purchase clothes with, and I left the house for that purpose. For some time I wandered up and down Shoreditch, trying to find a shop to suit me. I found one, and was on the point of entering, when the idea struck me that possibly I might be recognised,

as the same line of business had been carried on in that shop long before I left England. I remained for some moments in a state of doubt, and then remembered the name of an advertising tailor whose shop was in the Minories, and I immediately proceeded there to make my purchases. I must confess I felt some difficulty when I entered the shop, in conjuring up an excuse for the dress I wore, and my wish to change it for a more gentlemanly style. However, after a few minutes' conversation with the shopman, I found myself perfectly at my ease, for he seemed not in the slightest manner surprised at my ungainly appearance, and in a little time had fitted me with a respectable suit of clothes, shoes and all. He gave me permission also to change them there, and those I had lately worn I left behind me, telling the man he could give them to some poor creature who might be glad of them.

"On quitting the shop I noticed three men talking amicably together, at a short distance. Two of them—one a policeman, the other a corporal in the artillery—had their backs turned towards me, the third, a respectably-dressed man, was looking my way. I felt grateful I had been able to change my clothes with so much facility, as the corporal would not know me, and from the policeman I had, of course, nothing to fear. I passed on, and the moment I had done so the man in plain clothes called out, 'Hullo, Levesque! how are you? Why don't you notice me?'

"I now looked more earnestly at the speaker, and saw it was John Derigny. Although I had but little liked him, I stopped readily enough. In fact, he was the man of all others I wanted to see, as there was something I particularly wished to ask him about. He had been in the warehouse at Spital Square on the morning I was last there before leaving England, and I wished to know whether my poor father had found the money he had given me to take to the silk mercer's, and which I had left behind me on quitting the house."

Here Edmond broke off suddenly in his narrative.

"Why, Clara, what ails you?" he exclaimed.

Although I knew I had turned deadly pale, I assured him nothing was the matter. "But tell me, dear," I continued, "did I understand you to say that you had left the money at home the morning you quitted us?"

"Certainly, Clara; and, in fact, that was one of my reasons for going away. My father had enclosed the bank-notes in an envelope, which I placed in the breast pocket of my overcoat, and then, as I had slightly hurt my arm, I asked young Derigny to help me on with it. As he did so the coat fell to the ground, but he picked it up, and after he had helped me on with it, I left the house. Just before arriving at the silk mercer's, I placed my hand in my pocket to take out the envelope containing the notes, but to my intense alarm it was not there.

What to do I knew not. My first idea was that I had been robbed of it as I passed through a dense crowd on my way to the West End. Then again I remembered that my coat had been buttoned across my chest the whole way, and a thing of the kind could not have happened without its being forcibly torn open. The idea then occurred to me that very possibly when Derigny let the coat fall on the ground, the envelope might have dropped out, and I determined to return and seek for it. I acknowledge to have loitered some time on my road, and I reflected by the time I reached home it would be getting late, and the money ought to have been paid in the morning. I then conjured up the dispute which would arise between me and my poor father when he found how careless I had been, and the devil put it into my head not to return at all. You know, Clara, that for some time before my father and I had not been on good terms, and that I had several times intended to enlist. Well, I determined I would do so without delay, as there then appeared some good reason for it. I knew it would be dangerous to enlist in London, as I should be easily detected, so with a few shillings I had in my pocket I bent my way towards Chatham, and finding out a recruiting sergeant, I enlisted in the East India Company's Artillery—the rest you know.

"But now," he continued, "let me return to my meeting with Derigny after my quitting the tailor's shop in the Minories. I was about to reply to his remark, when he interrupted me by saying to the corporal and the policeman, 'This is the man you want; he is a deserter, and guilty of insubordination and mutiny as well. So now good-bye, Mr. Levesque, or MacIntyre, whichever you may please to call yourself. I will leave you with these gentlemen, who I have no doubt will treat you very hospitably,' so saying he walked away laughing.

"I was then conducted to the police-station, and from thence sent to Chatham, where for some time I remained in confinement, till a ship with recruits sailed for Madras, and I was sent back in her. On my arrival I found that my old captain was dead, so he could not appear against me respecting the assault, and as he was a man but very little liked, that portion of my fault was not pressed. I was, however, punished as a deserter, and sent to prison for two years. My time expired, and I left the army, and again worked my passage to England, and on my arrival bent my steps to Spital Square. You had left, and I could hear nothing of you whatever. I then entered as a sailor on board a ship, and have continued the same hard life till I was obliged to leave, about a month since, from ill health. And now, Clara, you know the end of my adventures."

I made no remark when Edmond had concluded his narrative, but rising from my chair I threw my arms around his neck and kissed him affectionately.

I required no corroboration of his statement respecting the bank-notes, but had I reflected a moment I might have remembered the unsatisfactory manner in which old Derigny used to speak of his son after Edmond left us. Moreover, I might also have called to mind seeing him one day in the street dressed in a most fashionable manner, and particularly noticing a massive gold watch-chain he wore.

It would be uninteresting to the reader, though most interesting to me, were I to describe the happy evening I now passed with my dear brother, whom I had lost for so many years. He remained with me till past midnight, and then, after telling him that any money he required he had merely to ask for, he took an affectionate leave of me, promising to breakfast with me the next morning, and remain at my house till I should give him notice to join us at Brighton.

Edmond was punctual the next morning, and we breakfasted together. It was arranged between us that I should start at once for Brighton to break the news of his return to my mother.

Before leaving home I said to him, "When my mother is sufficiently recovered for you to join us at Brighton, you will of course remain some time in her house; have you purchased a sufficient supply of clothes to take with you?"

"I have not, Clara," he said smiling, "and for the best of all possible reasons; I had not enough money for that purpose, Mr. Jordan having only given me what was necessary to procure those I now wear."

I now drew a cheque for fifty pounds, telling him when he required more to inform me, and I would furnish him with it. He thanked me warmly for my kindness, and hoped it would be long before he required more.

On my arrival at Brighton I was informed by the nurse that my mother's health had wonderfully improved during my absence.

"Indeed, my lady," she continued, "Mrs. Levesque hardly seems like the same person. She converses as freely and clearly as she did before her attack, and has asked for you several times during the last two hours. I will now, if you will allow me, prepare her to see you."

The nurse soon returned, saying my mother wished me to go to her immediately, and assured me that I need be under no alarm, as her mind was now quite sensible and composed.

On entering the room with the nurse, I found my mother sitting up in bed. She appeared delighted to see me, and after a few inquiries respecting my health and journey, she told the nurse that she wished to have some private conversation with me, and that she would ring the bell as soon as it was over. When the nurse had closed the door, my mother said, "Oh, Clara, my dear, you cannot think how

anxious I have been to see you. You know all about the severe fit I had, and the danger I have been in, for the doctor has told me that till within two days you have been in the house, although not allowed to see me. I have had a very severe and alarming time of it, my dear. How the attack occurred I know not; but I have a singular impression over me that somebody wanted to find Mr. Edmond Levesque, son of a silk manufacturer in Spitalfields, and that a reward was offered for him. Whether I read it, or heard some one speak of it, or dreamed it, I know not. Now tell me, Clara, do you know anything about it?"

Yes, my dear mother, I do. You have evidently forgotten the circumstance, but you read the advertisement in the *Times* newspaper the morning your illness occurred."

"But who could have put such an advertisement in the paper?"

"I did, mother," I replied. "I thought it would be a great happiness to you to see Edmond again."

"You were indeed right, Clara; but what was the result?"

"The result was that an impostor brought forward the son of Derigny as Edmond, and claimed the reward which had been offered. But fortunately the cheat was discovered, and shortly afterwards Edmond himself was found."

"Why then is he not here?" inquired my mother; "why should he be kept away?" she said, angrily.

"Because it was only last night we discovered him; and I thought it better not to allow you to see him till I had received permission from your doctor, as the state you were in when I left Brighton was such as to have made any sudden shock a great danger. But we can have him here to-morrow."

"Why not to-night, Clara?"

"Possibly he may not be at home, mother," I replied. "And again, I should not like you to see him without Dr. X——'s authority."

The doctor at that moment fortunately arrived at the house, and I told him in my mother's presence all that had occurred.

"You were quite right, Lady Morpeth," he said, taking my mother's hand as he spoke, "quite right not to allow your brother to see Mrs. Levesque to-day. The news has already increased the rapidity of her pulse very considerably, and she would do well to put off the interview till to-morrow. Now take my advice," he continued, addressing my mother, "and avoid any possibility of retarding the progress you have lately been making."

My mother unwillingly acquiesced, and shortly afterwards the doctor took his leave.

Seeing my mother in somewhat low spirits, I said to her, "I have not told you all, mother dear. There is more news yet, and news you will be delighted to hear. Edmond did not act the dishonest part with

regard to the money that we imagined him to be guilty of."

"I hope and pray, Clara, you may be right," said my mother. "But what then became of the money?"

"Young Derigny was the thief. Edmond left the envelope with the bank-notes behind him, and did not discover the loss till he had nearly arrived at the silk mercer's. Then dreading the quarrel which would occur between him and my father, he foolishly enlisted in the army. Of his adventures he will himself give you an account. I have listened to them attentively, and with great interest. That he has led a wild, rambling life is true, and that as a boy he was headstrong and disobedient; but his spirit of integrity was as pure as that of my dear father's. For his faults he has suffered severely by the privations he has endured."

It was some time before my mother could fully appreciate the joyful intelligence, which was marred only by the idea that my poor father had not before his death the same knowledge of Edmond's integrity. However, for that there was no help, and as Edmond had no doubt bitterly repented the offence he had given his father, it was not for us to sit in judgment on him.

I will not attempt to describe the meeting between my mother and Edmond, for it would require far greater graphic powers than my pen is capable of. It was decided that in future he should reside with my mother, and not quit her again till death should separate them.

Neither John Derigny nor his friend Jackson was found. The only intelligence we were able to obtain of Derigny was from the husband of his sister, who resided in Spitalfields. This was a very respectable man, who spoke of his brother-in-law as being nothing better than a dishonest scoundrel. He told us that shortly after Mr. Edmond Levesque had left home, Derigny had taken a disreputable public-house in the West End of town. How he obtained the money he had never been able to discover; but that no good had come of it, for he was very soon afterwards sold up. He had since suffered imprisonment for some act of dishonesty, and was always more or less in trouble. Every now and then he was haunting the neighbourhood of Spitalfields, and on those occasions generally associating with the worst characters to be found in it.

Adeline and her husband have returned to England, and taken a house in the country, half way between Brighton and London, where they live in a quiet, retired manner. She has several children, who are all sufficiently old to call me grandmamma. When not visiting my mother, I have generally one or more of them with me. After all the troubles and vicissitudes we have passed through, we are now as happy and united as when I first introduced my family to the reader.

My "memories," as poor Alice called them, as

well as her own, are now carefully put away, with two exceptions—the diamond brooch given me by my dear husband, and the broken emerald earring. The latter I have had made into a bracelet snap, and it is one of the most frequent ornaments I now wear. Do not imagine, reader, that female vanity

alone induces me to do so. On the contrary, I wear it solely with the intention that a reminiscence of my poor humble friend Alice Morgan might continually be under my notice, bringing her to my mind each time my eye glanced on it.

THE END.

THE IMPRECATORY PSALMS.

BY THE REV. G. A. CHADWICK, M.A., RECTOR OF ST. JAMES'S, BELFAST.

"And slow great kings : for his mercy endureth for ever."

THERE is a shallow and conceited way of looking at the terrible wrath of the Old Testament against persecuting Gentile nations. It assumes that the fierce words which startle us must have been wrong then because they would be wrong now. It either endeavours, with but little candour, to force a new meaning upon them, or maintains that, although inspiration was in some way mixed up with them, yet they are themselves human, vindictive, and blameworthy. Many good people would be glad at heart to get rid of the imprecatory psalms entirely. Yet we ought to have more trust in God and in his Word than to quail before any of its utterances.

"Whatever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." There is "comfort," therefore, if we believe St. Paul, in whatever things were written aforetime. And if anything does not seem comforting at first, let us look the difficulty in the face; let us not shrink because the superficial aspect of anything is strange and even terrible. We shall find, however unlikely at first it appears, that even the thunder-peals and blasts of tempest are useful, that without them we could have no peace, but only stagnation—only a hot and sulphurous atmosphere before the storm, instead of the blue skies and balmy breezes, vocal with song-birds, which proclaim that the air is cleared.

What is it then that really alarms us in reading the passionate outcry of David against his foes? It is surely not the idea of terrible judgments falling upon the ungodly. For this is a fact. The old world being overflowed with water perished in one vast catastrophe, and over the strong, the proud, the beautiful—over husband and mother and child—swept the universal shroud of foam. It is a fact that whole cities were consumed in the flame of God, and that all the woes of which the Psalmist sang came, tenfold multiplied, upon every civilisation of the ancient heathenism, and also upon degenerate Israel herself. And no infidel reproaches Heaven for this righteous vex-

geance. When it is done we set to our seal that it was just, and are not ashamed ourselves to exult when it seems to us that vengeance has fallen upon some boastful and exalted wickedness. Who has ever called it unchristian that when a mighty navy came against our fathers, with racks and chains and thumbscrews, and when the proud waters swallowed them up, the rescued people should ascribe their annihilation to the God of battles, and sing *Te Deum*, and say, "He blew with his wind and scattered them!"

To give thanks for a crushing stroke *actually delivered* is therefore more than allowable: to withhold them would be ungrateful; to blame them would be worse than pharisaic. It is a New Testament voice which cries, "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast dealt thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy."

What we shrink from is simply the anticipation of wrath before it actually comes. Our Christian duty is to hope to the last, to desire not the death of a sinner, to pray for them who despitefully use us; and we do not tremble at Miriam's song, "The horse and the rider hath he thrown into the sea," but only at David's prayer, "Destroy them, O Lord, destroy them!" and Jeremiah's imprecation, "Let them be overthrown before thee." We feel, and rightly feel, that it is quite a different thing to adore the God of Judgments, and to call out beforehand for his judgment to smite those who despitefully use us and persecute us.

Now what is really at the bottom of this distinction? Why should we thank God when he actually judgeth in the earth, and yet not pray beforehand for his judgments to awaken, and for his anger to break the arm of the oppressor? Clearly, because there is hope as long as there is life. Our worst enemy, like Saul keeping the clothes of the murderers of the earliest martyr, may preach to-morrow the truth which he persecutes to-day. The love of Christ has such power to win the hardest heart, and the ways of the Spirit are so like the wind blowing where we cannot calculate,

that we blaspheme our Gospel when we despair of any. And if the final doom of no man be sealed, if the deafest ear may be pierced by a voice saying, "Ephphatha," that is, "be opened," and the four-days' dead may come forth out of the tomb, then indeed hard would be the heart, and the poison of asps would be under the tongue, which would, for private animosity, deliver up such a soul to death.

But this was not the case with Judaism. Even within its own compass there were sins for which no means of atonement were provided, and no hope was given. And what was the state of the Gentile world at large? Not so utterly dark as rashness and rhetoric and a merciless theology have sometimes painted it. David was himself inspired to tell how God had sworn to set up a priest for ever after the order of that mysterious Gentile, to whom the "father of the faithful" paid tithes. In David's own veins ran the blood of Ruth, a Gentile, whose tender story inspiration has recorded in words of matchless pathos. But yet there was no provision for dealing with the nations. Intercourse with them was suspected; missions to them were undreamed of, and would have signally failed, because the Holy Ghost was not yet poured out. Israel was an inhospitable island, with streams and pastures for its own children, but no haven on its iron coasts for those whom the angry seas tossed. If they seemed to float, well; but if they foundered, the time was still far off when any lifeboat would be launched to rescue them. And certainly there could be no mistake about the character of the hateful nations which raged and corrupted one another around the Holy Land. How many or few would be their stripes hereafter, or what they knew of their Lord's will, was not for David to judge, and he has not judged it; but he could see plainly that there was no cure for them in time—their side was chosen, their prolonged existence would be a prolongation of unspeakable vice, cruelty, horror, spiritual pollution, and death. He had no commission to preach to them about any Christ. The moral law once written in their hearts was buried fathoms deep in foul deposits of superstition and blood and fleshliness. And when they added to all this hopeless vileness the crime of striking at the one lamp which burned in the shadow of universal death, is it any wonder that David, knowing them to be God's irreclaimable foes as well as his own, exclaimed, "Destroy them, O Lord, destroy them!" not that revenge may be glutted, but that the only lesson may be taught which such as they can learn—"that the heathen may know themselves to be but men." Our prayers are echoes of the High Priest's prayer: "Let them alone this year also, that I may dig about them, and dung them: and if they will bear fruit, well: and if not"—listen,

for it is He who says it—"after that thou shalt cut them down." But for these there was no more digging nor dunging; they stood up like the fabled upas in breadth of luxuriant rankness, and to give them longer time was but to let more poison reek into the air around. Cut them down in mercy. Let the free breezes from the mountains sweep over the plain from which this forest of pestilence intercepted them; and as pale and wasted cheeks regain their colour, and as the persecuted Church lifts up its drooping head, who shall blame the rescued ones for singing, "He slew famous kings: for his mercy endureth for ever?" Above all, who shall blame the generous enemy who showed, when hunted like a beast from cave to cave, that the personal rancour even of ungrateful Saul could not provoke him by the most striking opportunities to deal a merely vindictive blow? We abstain, not because vengeance is inherently execrable, but because hope is still alive. When hope dies, vengeance is God's, and he will repay. Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, are still reserved for every soul of man that doeth evil.

Two thoughts will raise what goes before from the level of mere controversy to be a Christian meditation. I. The time comes when it is merciful to smite down the sinner. We cannot now say when it has come to any, but it does come. One man's iniquity affronts the good and emboldens the evil; another man's formality freezes the devout, makes Pharisees of his imitators, and blasphemers of those who see, behind the mask of his profession, the livid face of spiritual death. Where shall he be left? In earth? His conscience is seared—the Gospel is hid to him—he is lost! The Master says, "No fruit grow on thee henceforth for ever," and the leaves of his profession shrivel and fade, and he dries up from the roots. Shall he be sent to heaven? The angels would see through him, the saintly brotherhood and goodly fellowship would be broken, an insincere voice would ring false in all the anthems, and he himself would shudder in the purity, the love, the detection that enveloped him, and would die in an air too thin and fine for him to breathe. Outer darkness is the only place where incurable sin cannot diffuse death; and Mercy itself, though the sinner were the signet upon its own right hand, would cast him thence. "He slew famous kings: for his mercy endureth for ever." Who, then, will continue in sin? Who will provoke Him to jealousy? Who will not "kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and thou perish from the way?" Let the text warn us that even Mercy may cease to plead our cause, and the voice which thrilled with tenderness upon our behalf may rise, like a soft wind swelling into tempest, to swear in his wrath that we shall not enter into his rest.



(Drawn by F. A. FRASER.)

"It spake to her of shadowing wings,
It whispered, 'Trust Him and rejoice'"—p. 858.

II. But if the very vengeance of God is the shadow of Mercy's averted face, if he destroys to stop the spread of pollution, and to rescue the victims of the sinner's persuasion or tyranny, then assuredly there is hope for all who consent to part with sin, to cease their opposition, to remember and return to the Lord. Think, why have you been spared so long? What mean the days which creep past so monotonously, in so weary and dull a round of earthliness, small cares and small hopes, and stagnation which breeds corruption? Ah! it means that the Angel of the Covenant may even yet trouble the waters with a healthful movement and a gracious agitation. What means the continuance of a life which is even growing worse and worse, almost unconsciously perhaps, but yet you start every now and again to find some new evil predominant, vice rising

upon you like a tide, virtue melting away like the sand-heap which every wave reduces? It means that One is able even yet to bid the waters retire and the dry land appear from the chaotic confusion of your ruined soul. You have been spared because an Intercessor lifts wounded hands, and the Father looks upon the face of his Anointed, once buffeted and blood-stained for you, and for his sake waits and watches to be gracious. Take him for your Intercessor indeed; commit your time and eternity, your body, soul, and spirit into his hands, which are as tender as they are strong; and instead of this epitaph graven over the place of the ruin of a soul, "Slain! for his mercy endureth for ever," there shall be a ceaseless nuptial song at the marriage supper of the Lamb—"He remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever."

THE MOUNTAIN FLOWER-SHOW.

I DRANK the pleasant evening air;
Sweet lonely hills and moorlands brown
Held small meres nestling here and there,
Where from the clouds the hawk swooped down;

And, dotted white, the cottage walls
Betokened solemn things to me.
Nought on a human soul that falls
With thought of God, is vanity!

The hut was small, the pain was long—
She could not read, she could not sew.
She saw one teacher, sweet and strong
In silence—'twas a rose in blow.

In silence, like the deepest things—
In sweetness, like a gentle voice—
It spake to her of shadowing wings,
It whispered, "Trust Him and rejoice."

She watched her grandchild tend it well,
She thought whose kind Hand kept her too;

And through the lonely hours a spell
Of peace it breathed, and blessing true:

For on the leaves and of the flowers
The Saviour looked, the Saviour spake,
And bade consider them in hours
When heart should faint and brow should ache.

And then I thought, Not only thou
Whom pain is holding fast and stern,
In thought may'st o'er the lilies bow—
They are a joy for all to learn.

They twine, like love, the heart about,
Like hope they colour holy dreams;
Their silence more than youth's glad shout
Doth say that faith is all it seems.

Then let them win us, day by day—
Like them upspringing from the sod,
And leaving at our feet the clay
Of earth, and rising up to God: A. B.

THE DINGY HOUSE AT KENSINGTON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ABOUT NELLIE," "THE TROUBLES OF CHATTY AND MOLLY," ETC. ETC.

CHAPTER XVIII.



WHAT a lovely place it was! Polly never forgot the impression Benthwaite made upon her when she first saw it by daylight. It was one of those little lakeland villages which are scattered through the district, shut in by the mountains, and lulled by the music of a hundred rills which trickled down their heather-covered sides.

It was near to Derwentwater and Friar's Crag—a woody bit of rocky land stretching out some half mile along the margin of the lake—from which she could watch the ripple of the water and listen to the far-off thunder of Lodore. She found a niche, and taking a book, spent morning after morning among the moss, and fern, and lichen-covered stones which formed the base of the crag. She went to her hiding-place often of an evening too—the natives always strolled

on to the market-town of Keswick, and did not trouble themselves about the natural beauties of the place—and watched the setting sun, and the mist fall softly like a veil upon the lake, and the clouds steal round the grand old hills, cloaking them with a heavenly mantle, till she almost wondered that in so beautiful a place Richard Brandford had had any heart left even for Clara Clayton. She had seen nothing of him since her arrival, and as the days passed on without her doing so she began to hope that it might be possible to escape him altogether. She could not ask her aunt any questions about him—the process was too troublesome, for Miss Wood was as deaf as a post; but the Brandfords seemed to be great people in the place, and she heard their names repeatedly. Once when she stopped to admire an old woman's garden on one of her rambles, the owner of it came out, and with North-country politeness showed her the flowers, and remarked that Mr. Brandford, up at the Laurels, had sent her most of them.

"Does he do much good about here?" she asked.

"Yes, miss, that he does; and he never fusses nor talks about it," the old woman answered. "He built all these cottages for us last winter, and put the old folk comfortably in them: there's very few like him."

"Ah," thought Polly, as she trudged home that afternoon, "Richard did not talk much, but he did a great deal, and I think that is much better. Oh dear me! I wonder if I shall be as deaf as Aunt Maria when I am a settled-down old maid like she is."

A pony-carriage was at Miss Wood's door, and the next moment Polly found herself face to face with Richard Brandford's wife.

"How do you do, Miss Dawson?" she said, looking wonderfully bright and pretty under a blue-veiled hat. "I am so sorry for all your troubles; I heard all about them from Miss Wood. I have come on purpose to carry you off for a long lonely drive to Barrow, for you are not strong enough to walk. Oh yes, you must come." Polly refused, but she would not hear her, and Miss Wood insisted, and at last, sorely against her will, she was seated in the phaeton, and Clara, laughing and merry as a cricket, jumped in after her, and set the ponies off at a full gallop, rattling on as hard as she could about all sorts of things, while Polly sat very still, wondering if she could really be awake.

"Lovely ponies, are they not? but apt to get very saucy if they are not taken out. Dick declares I shall be pitched face downwards into a ditch some fine day with my mad driving, but that is only one of his favourite disagreeable speeches," and she laughed. "He gets worse than ever. I think he ought to come and drive them, but he never does. My husband lets me do just as I like, and I always go about alone. You must come and dine with us one day, Miss Dawson."

"Oh no, thank you—" Polly began, more frightened than ever.

"But I shall insist upon it. Is not this a lovely road? We are nearly at Barrow already." Suddenly a face appeared on the other side of the low stone wall which separated the meadows from the road, and she pulled up in an instant. "Dick!" she exclaimed; "why, who would have thought of seeing you here!"

Polly turned slowly round, and found herself being stared full in the face by Richard Brandford.

"Enjoying one of your helter-skelter races over the country, eh, Clara? How do you do, Miss Dawson?" he gave her a little formal bow, and said the few words in a tone that would almost have done credit to Margaret Albury.

"You had better get in, Dick, these animals won't stand still for smalltalk," Clara said, tugging at the reins; but he declined. "Oh, well, if you won't, good-bye, and good riddance, Mr. Bear," and they tore on. "I always call him a bear," she explained to Polly, who wondered how she could be so disrespectful. She would never had dared to do such a thing even in their most intimate days. "He's so like one, isn't he? he has just that creature's silent, obstinate, retiring habits. How did you know him, Miss Dawson?"

"I met him in London before he was married," she answered slowly.

"Married!" she exclaimed, opening her merry blue eyes in astonishment; "he's not married!" and she jerked at the reins till the unfortunate ponies nearly shied.

Polly started forward, "Is he not your husband?" she asked, her heart standing still.

"My husband?" and she laughed till the tears trickled down her face. "No, thank goodness, not he! Whatever put such a mad idea into your head?"

"It was in the paper."

"Ah! I told papa-in-law Felix he should have put Richard Brandford, of Derwent Hollow; but between ourselves, papa-in-law-Felix objects to Dick being the head of the family, and said it wasn't necessary. Both the cousins were named Richard, after their grandfather. Dick is the elder branch, and is always called Mr. Brandford by the multitude, and Dick by the family, to distinguish him from my husband, who is Mr. Richard Brandford proper. I told the mighty owner of the Laurels that some folks might think he was the martyr, but he was extra disagreeable about that time, and said he didn't care what they thought. What an excellent joke! I shall never forget it; I'll send for him on purpose to tell him."

"Oh, pray do!" Polly said, thinking it would be the wisest thing she could do, and remembering with horror that dreadful little note she had sent him, which she could quite understand his being too proud to answer. "I must have been mad to judge him so meanly," she thought.

"I never shall forget it," Clara laughed again.

"Why he never even looks at any one. I'd as soon marry a bat. No, he is a confirmed old bachelor, and does not care for anything but his books, and long walks, and the good of his tenants. He is a very good boy, I must say that—quite a great blessing to the place, though he does not know it. I always call him a boy, excepting when I call him a bear, though I should say he must be thirty now, and he wears that ugly beard which makes him look so old. It will end by making him bald, and then he'll be a horrid fright, and I often tell him so. No, Dick will never marry," Clara repeated; "I wish he would; the Laurels want a mistress. The secret of it is he hates being bound or obliged to do anything; he has almost a mania on that point, and he'll never love a woman well enough to give up his freedom and his queer ways for her sake. If he did, too, I don't believe his pride would let him own it even to himself: he is a very queer individual."

CHAPTER XIX.

"I WONDER if he will ever forgive me," thought Polly. "I don't believe he ever will, and I don't suppose he will ever think of seeing me any more;" though all the time she did suppose it. "However," she said, but she doubted herself while she said it, "I am quite content now. It was only the idea of his being married which I could not bear—to know that it was a sin even to think of him—and to such a pretty girl too!" She would have been more reconciled perhaps had she fancied him married to what poor Mrs. Dawson would have called "an ugly cat." "Oh! how stupid I was!" and she laughed, which she had not done for months before. "I wonder what he will say when he knows what I thought. Of course he will understand it all then. But if he doesn't, and still thinks I wrote that letter on purpose, what shall I do?" and all her fears returned as she waited day after day without seeing him. She thought once or twice of writing to him, but could not; besides, he might not care to hear from her now, and if he did, surely he would find her out? It would be very awkward to meet him again she thought; and though she longed to do so, she yet dreaded it so much that once or twice when she saw him in the distance, she retreated as fast as she could.

Dick Brandford laughed heartily, he could not help it, when Clara related to him with a wry face and mild horror how Polly had supposed she was married to him. "I believe she must have got hold of the story when she wrote that letter," he thought; and in spite of his love of freedom and all his old bachelor tastes he tried very hard to come across her. He knew he must in time, in a small place like Benthwaite, and so he would not write. Polly's letter had been a sore point for nearly a year with him, and he would have been very glad to rub it out of his memory, perhaps as glad as Polly's self; he

was a man who so seldom showed what he felt. A fortnight passed, however, without his meeting her.

"She hides herself as carefully as a nun," he said, almost savagely; but he saw her one morning soon afterwards, and followed at a respectful distance till she reached the border of Keswick town, and turning off by Derwentwater made for Friar's Crag. He lost sight of her thence as she disappeared quickly through the trees which extended to its edge, but he knew she must come out at a given point, and he pushed on. "Now, young lady, you are caught," he said, as he emerged from the wood at the end of the crag, but she was nowhere to be seen. "I believe the girl is a witch," he said angrily, for he could not understand his own eagerness in seeking her. Then he looked over the side of the crag, and there, seated among the moss, and fern, and lichen-covered stones, was a little figure draped in black. "Polly!" he said.

So he had found her at last! Her heart gave a bound of happiness so acute it ended in a sob that was almost pain. She rose to her feet, took his extended hand, and climbed up the crag. She dropped it when she reached the summit, and stood trembling almost like a culprit before him, waiting for him to speak.

"Polly," he said, "why, what a long time it is since I saw you—that is, to speak to." He spoke as calmly as if time had wholly blotted the past from his memory.

It stung her to the quick, and helped her to regain her self-possession immediately. "Yes," she answered gently, "a very, very long time, and I thought——"

"Well, what did you think?" he asked, in something of the old teasing manner; and he looked at her, and could not help noticing, how different she was from the Polly of old—the Polly to whom beads and bows and trinkets and ribbons were second nature. Yet, as she stood there in her plain black dress, with her hair falling low on her forehead as ever, but with the colour gone, with much of the roundness, from her cheeks, there was something which drew her closer to him, and found its way to his heart much more readily than all her beauty and coquetry had formerly done.

"I thought you were married," she said humbly.

"Yes, I know you did. What a goose you were;" and he laughed.

"Oh, don't!" she cried; she could not bear to hear him laugh when she was so miserable, and longed to sit down and cry. "Oh, don't! don't!" and she put her hands up to her ears to shut out the sound. How could he laugh when she was so wretched, and aching for some sign to show she was not forgotten—how could he be so cruel? She had so fancied meeting him again too, since she had discovered her mistake; now she would tell him all she had heard and supposed, and implore his pardon for her doubt, and

then he would forgive her and take her to his heart again, and all the past would be forgotten. This was what she had pictured to herself; but to meet him thus, oh, it was cruel!

"Oh, don't what?" he said, still mockingly; but his manner softened a little as he saw the sleepy brown eyes fill with tears, and the sweet lips, which formed such a contrast in their redness to the white cheeks, tremble.

"Nothing," she answered—"only let me go; please let me go;" and she moved a step forward, but he stood in front of her. "I must go, indeed I must," she said imploringly.

"Tell me first why you wrote me that letter, you little heartless coquette."

"I thought you were going to marry Miss Clayton," she said, and she raised her head proudly. "My aunt told me she was going to be married to a Mr. Richard Brandford, and naturally I thought it was you—and—and—"

"Well?" he said, dimly beginning to understand it all.

"And I saw her and asked her, and she said, 'Yes.' I did not know your cousin's name was the same as yours, and I could not bear you should think I was——"

"You were what?"

"A girl you could make a shuttlecock of as you pleased;" and the light flashed for a moment from her eyes, and the old flush came back, "and so I wrote you that letter. I thought I would not let you know I had found out anything, but——"

"But that you would do a little diamond cut diamond business, I see. You had a great deal of confidence in me, considering I had assured you only a day or two before of my affection."

"I know," and her eyes filled again, and the light died out of them, "that is where I was so wrong; but then you know you told me you loved me, but you never said a word about anything else, and——"

"And so you judged me in the letter and not in the spirit," he said sarcastically. "Well, perhaps you are right; a woman has no right to consider herself bound to a man, or he to her, until he says formally, 'Will you marry me?' and she answers formally, 'Yes.' I did not think you had so much of the paternal legal spirit in you, Polly."

"Will you let me go now?" was all she could reply.

"Yes, you can go if you like," he said, standing aside for her to pass; but she did not move. "Well, are you going?" he asked.

"No," she said chokingly, and she put out her two hands imploringly for a second, and then drew them quickly back; but he caught them in his, and drew her unresistingly to him.

"I believe you care for me still," he said; "do you?"

"Yes, I do! Oh yes—yes!"

"And can you believe I love you now, and will you marry me after all, Polly?"

But her power of speaking had vanished, and she only gave a little quick nod; and then he put his arms round her, and Polly's doubts and fears ended for ever.

Polly thought it would be very difficult to tell Robert Welch of the change in affairs, but found it less so than she expected, for in his reply he was careful not to say a word to give her pain, or to let her see how hard the news had been to bear. He did not see her again for a long, long time, but he goes to Benthwaite every year now, and he loves her as fondly as ever. And Polly knows it, and Polly's husband knows it, and everybody connected with her knows it; but there is no harm in it. His love for her is too great and true for it to contain a single thought of wrong; and moreover he extends his affection to those who are dearest to her now. He is still single and well-off, and he talks of settling down sometimes, and Polly threatens to find him a wife; but he shakes his head, and thinks he will wait till she is old, and he can find a face that pleases him better. But Polly will never grow old, for she is one of those women who always remain young, and whose age is only like tired youth.

The house at Kensington is let to a newly-married couple and a baby and a perambulator and a pretty nursemaid, and it is papered and painted and varnished everywhere, and picked out in all sorts of colours. It has bright green blinds at the windows and flowers in the balconies, and if you hunted all through the parish you would never be able to guess which was once the Dingy House at Kensington.

THE END.

"NO."

WHAT a curious title!" I think I hear my young friends exclaim. Such a little word too, and yet at times so difficult to say. It is lisped by infants very early in life, before they can know its importance. It is sure to be found in the first lessons of a child learning to read, so that he is acquainted

with it almost before any other word, and will often shake his head to represent it before he can articulate; yet in after life it often proves one of the greatest obstacles to those who cannot say it at the right time.

Frank Summers was a bright, rosy, curly-headed boy, who had gone through the process of lisping

this word at the usual period, had learned to read it readily, and until he went to school net only used it, but often vexed his mamma and papa by employing it a little too often; however, strange to say, he seemed all at once to lose the power of saying "no." He was not sent to school till the age of ten, but having been taught all the rudiments of English at home, he did very well with those of his own age, or rather would have done so, but for the lack of sufficient moral courage to say "no."

"Please, mum, Master Frank has not come home to his dinner again; I'm sure 'tis too bad. I've a great mind to go and fetch him."

"No, Mary," replied her mistress. "I am very sorry to find he is kept in so often, but your master has the greatest confidence in Dr. Sandiland, and we feel sure he would not punish him unless he had good reason for doing so. There he comes, Mary, so you see the doctor has not kept him long to-day. Frank, my boy, late again; how is this?"

"I don't know. I only slipped out of the gate at play-time to go and buy some hardbake for one of the boys."

"But why did you go, when you knew it was against the rules?"

"Johnson asked me, and I did not like to refuse him."

"So you would rather disobey your master than say 'no,' that is what it comes to. When will you learn to use that little word, Frank?"

"I did not think there was any harm in going."

"Then why did you slip out, as you say you did? people who are not ashamed of what they do, never have to act slyly."

The next day Frank was home late again for a similar offence; and so it went on, till his parents saw that this fault was growing upon him, and that he was becoming quite indifferent. He seemed to think nothing of the disgrace of being punished. One thing concerned them very much, he was always so anxious to get extra pocket-money, yet seemed to be always without any; his natural cheerfulness, too, seemed to be giving place to growing discontent and peevishness.

One day his papa surprised him in the summer-house; he was busily engaged with some figures in a little book. As soon as his father saw what he was doing he said, "Show me that book, Frank." His son became very much confused, and tried to hide it, but seeing that his parent looked angry when he attempted concealment, reluctantly gave it up.

"What do all these figures mean, Frank?"

"It is the book I keep to remember what the boys owe me."

"But the boys have no business to owe you anything; do you owe them money?"

"I only borrowed a shilling, which I mean to pay back next pocket-money day."

"And pray why did you borrow so small a

sum? Could not your mamma have given it to you?"

"I did not like to ask her, because she had given me some money the same morning."

"And what did you want this shilling so particularly for?"

"Why, Kemp asked me to lend him one, and I could not till I had borrowed it."

"So you preferred getting into debt to saying 'no.'"

"I did not like to offend him, pa; I am sure he would have been angry if I had refused him."

"And I am angry that you did not, and that you did what you knew would displease me to please him. What do you say to that, Frank?"

"I will not borrow any more money to lend, really I will not."

"That is not the point my boy; of course you did very wrong to borrow, but what I want you now to learn is the use of the little word 'no.' It will save you no end of difficulties in after life, if you determine while young to practise the moral courage to refuse to do anything which your conscience tells you is wrong; you may offend a few in the beginning, but never mind that, my boy, you cannot please every one; so have a mind of your own, and do only what you know to be right."

A few days later Frank was again put to the test. A boy who was considered the greatest bully in the school, and consequently very much feared by the younger ones, came up to him with a letter, which he told him he must post at once. Poor Frank was very confused; he tried hard to say "no," but could not get up his courage sufficiently; so he replied, "I have so much to do, ask some one else."

"I'll get you plenty more to do if you don't be off directly; come now, no trifling with me, or you'll be sorry for it, youngster."

"Can't I take it as I go home?"

"No; you must take it now the master's back is turned; slip off at once," and as at the same time he was nearly jerked off his seat, he once more yielded against his will to break the rules of the school. But we must do him the justice this time to admit that he did it most reluctantly; he was so thoroughly vexed at his own weakness, that he could not help shedding tears, as he slowly bent his unwilling steps to the post-office. Having deposited the letter, he stood for a few minutes irresolute, dreading to go back to school and ashamed to go home. All at once his attention was drawn towards two poor boys, one much older than the other, both being miserably clad. The elder boy held a broom in his hand, the younger one was furnished with matches and newspapers. They appeared to be quarrelling. Frank's curiosity was excited, and he drew nearer that he might hear what they were talking about. He soon discovered that the elder boy wanted the younger one to do some-

thing which he did not care to do himself, for just as he approached near enough the younger one very sharply replied, "Not I, do it yersel; I spec's ye wouldn't ax me to eat yer dinner fer ye. Ye're too big a coward to do it yersel, so yer wants to make me yer catspaw. No—no, I know a trick better ner that, so good day to yer," and off he ran whistling on his way.

"That boy knows how to say 'no,'" soliloquised Frank. "I wonder how he learnt it; I've a great mind to run after him and ask; and he's so poor, too. I'm sure he would not have been afraid of offending that horrid Griffiths. I'll go back to school at once, and just let any one ask me again, and it strikes me I shall find an answer for them."

Then he ran off, never stopping till he reached the school door, where he met the master. "How now, Master Frank! how is this? shirking your work again? Twenty lines of Latin before you go home."

Frank walked quietly to his desk to prepare to do his additional task, and so earnest was he in his resolve that it should be the last one for 'the silly little word "no,"' that he did it in half the usual time, then ran all the way home, so that he was only a few minutes late, and no questions were asked; but while dining alone with his mamma she said, "I am so pleased to see you home in such good time, that as I intend taking a drive over to your cousins', I shall send a note to Dr. Sandiland's for leave of absence and take you with me."

Frank was at first delighted with the prospect of the half-holiday, but looking very thoughtfully a few minutes, to his mamma's great surprise he replied, "I'm not so good as you think me; I've been kept in again for that nasty little word, but it's the last time, believe me; I know now how to say it, and you will see I shall never be kept in again for that."

He then told her all that had taken place that day, and "only to think," he continued, "that what I could not learn from any one else, I have learnt from that poor boy."

Frank returned to school that afternoon, and was rather disappointed that his resolution was not put to the test; but in a few days he was again assailed by the much-to-be-feared bully, Griffiths, who happened to be sitting next to him when the master was complaining of the carelessness of some of the boys who were continually tearing or losing their books, and ordered each boy to lay his Latin grammar on the desk before him, that the usher who walked round might take the names of all defaulters. Frank's books were nearly new; Griffiths could scarcely find one, and usually borrowed the first he could lay his hands on; they were allowed a few minutes to collect their books together, expecting that others also might be called for: Griffiths turned at once to Frank and said, "Lend us your Latin gram., old fellow."

"No, I can't," replied Frank; "you know I have to show it now."

"We'll see all about that! give it up at once, or I'll make it rather hot for you."

"Well, then, make it hot," answered Frank; "I shall not lend you my book."

His companion was about to use violent means to gain his end, but catching the eye of the master slunk away into his seat, satisfying himself by promising to be revenged on the morrow, knowing he would be kept in that day.

Both were early in the play-ground before school hours the next day. Frank walked bravely up to his schoolfellow and said, "Here is a present for you of a new Latin grammar. I was sorry to deny you yesterday, but I am determined, Griffiths, for the future to say 'no' when I feel that I ought not to do what I am asked, so if you don't want to hear it, you had better not ask me again to do things for you which you know I ought not to do."

Griffiths was so taken aback by Frank's manly look and speech, that he did not know what to say, but as he had been threatened with additional lessons if he did not produce his Latin grammar, he gladly accepted the peace offering; and Frank had the satisfaction of finding that the little spirit he had shown saved him all further annoyance and vexation; his parents, too, had the happiness of continually observing his improvement in other ways M. N.

"THE QUIVER" BIBLE CLASS.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 831.

307. By Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 15).
308. Luke xiv. 26; Matt. xvi. 24.
309. Ezek. xxxvii. 12, 13.
310. "Let us build us . . . a tower . . . lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Gen. xi. 4).
311. It is used to designate the Christian Sabbath (Rev. i. 10). It is used for the Day of Judgment (1 Thess. v. 2).
312. Ahasuerus promised it to Esther (Esth. vii. 2). (2) Herod promised it to Herodias (Mark vi. 23).
313. The Book of Jehu (2 Chron. xx. 24).

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 847.

314. Abraham (Gen. xviii. 3); Lot (Gen. xix. 2); Manoah (Judg. xiii. 15, 16).
315. "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice" (Hos. vi. 6). See Matt. ix. 13 and xii. 7.
316. The Feast of Purim (Esth. ix. 26); the Feast of Dedication (John x. 22).
317. Ps. lxxxiii. 11; Isa. ix. 4; Heb. xi. 32.
318. Fasting (Esth. iv. 16).
319. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. xi. 1).
320. Acts xii. 15.

BIBLE NOTES.

THE SEED GROWING SECRETLY (Mark iv. 26-29).

SO is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how." This parable concerning the mysterious and Divine growth of the seed of the Gospel in the heart and in the world, even to the end, which shows that it has a life of its own, and will unfold itself according to regular stages—"first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear," is recorded by St. Mark alone of the Evangelists. In another parable, that of the sower and the seed, Christ represents himself as the sower, so here we may conclude from the whole tenor of this parable that he means his hearers to see him as the central figure—that it is he who first casts seed into the ground, and that it is he who in due time puts in the sickle. He, for reasons of his own, saw fit to work in the world personally but for a short time; still, ere he left he entrusted the task of calling men everywhere to repentance to others, and it is they who, in a secondary sense, are to be regarded as sowers in the kingdom of God. When each one, called to work for God, proclaims aloud the glad tidings of the Gospel of salvation, he is casting seed into the ground. In full reliance on God's promise that his word shall not return to him void (Isa. lv. 11), he does not think it necessary to keep a continual watch; he sleeps securely by night, and by day rises and goes about his ordinary business, leaving the seed in great measure to itself, which must in time spring up, for God nurtures it, but he knows not how.

"The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself." It is from the earth, fulfilling the object of its creation, that the fruit springs, but the earth cannot do without rain and sun, and other influences to assist it in its work of germination; so in like manner, it is from the heart that the seed implanted by God will spring up into everlasting life, and this it cannot do without nourishment to support it at every stage.

How this seed springs from the earth, why it does not require more care at man's hands, are mysteries in God's laws by which he governs the universe. We may dig deep into the soil in which the seed is planted, and examine with minuteness the roots that shoot downwards into the earth, still we are no nearer a solution of the mystery as to how the seed grows. The seed which is the Word of God grows, too, by processes which are hidden from us. We cannot tell how it takes root in the human heart, we know not why it springs up and flourishes in some, and bears no fruit at all in others. It is the duty of every sower to cast the seed broadcast, and not to set himself up as a judge of the places most suited to receive it; having sown, let him commit the rest to God; this by no means precludes the necessity of following up the work which has been commenced by his instrumentality. This meaning is well brought out by the apostle when he says, "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. iii. 6).

"When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come." The seed that was sown has now grown up, has come to maturity, is fully ripe, and is ready to be gathered in. It has passed through its various stages, and now only awaits the reaper's pleasure. How like is this to man's advance in his heavenward course.

This parable points out, for the instruction and comfort of all whom it ought to concern, that there are two moments which, in the life of a man, are in a very peculiar manner Christ's. One, when the Divine life—that is, a saving knowledge of God—is by him first implanted in the soul—this is, and can be none other than the seed-time; the other, when that soul has grown in peace and love, in faith and good works, and is ripe for his kingdom, and he gathers it to himself—this is the harvest. This intimate contact with Christ at these two periods may be enjoyed by every one; his favours are limited only by the obduracy of those who will not receive them.

EDITORIAL NOTE.

In the next Part of THE QUIVER will be commenced a New Serial Story of great beauty and interest, entitled THE THREE HOMES, which will be illustrated by J. D. Linton. In the same Part will be commenced a Story for Children—PATSY'S FIRST GLIMPSE OF HEAVEN; together with the first of a series of Papers on THE SILENT LIFE of the Deaf and Dumb, by the Rev. Samuel Smith, Chaplain of the Deaf and Dumb Church of Saint Saviour's, Oxford Street, London. Also the first of a series of Papers by the Rev. James Spence, D.D., entitled HOURS WITH DANIEL; and all those features which have secured for THE QUIVER the immense popularity it has long enjoyed will be continued.

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